

July 15, 1997

BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group Update of Activities

Major Discussion Points from Work Group Meetings

Development of the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program has developed an Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP) whose goal is to improve and increase aquatic and terrestrial habitats and improve ecological functions in the Bay-Delta to support sustainable populations of diverse and valuable plant and animal species. The foundation of the ERPP is that restoration of ecological processes (associated with streamflow, stream channels, watersheds and floodplains) will create and maintain habitats essential to species dependent on the Delta. Three volumes comprise the ERPP describing the visions for the ecosystem elements (Volume I), the visions for the Ecological Zones (Volume II) and the visions for adaptive management (Volume III). The Executive Summary of the ERPP was released in April and Volume I was released at the end of June. Volumes II and III are anticipated to be available in late July. Upon the release of Volume III, a 45-day public review period will begin. The BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group has identified and discussed several issues of importance relevant to the ERPP.

- Scientific uncertainty and other issues inherent in the ERPP should be evaluated through a peer review process of the ERPP.
- A good adaptive management strategy is essential to the successful implementation of the ERPP. The Work Group discussed the role of adaptive management in the ERPP and reviewed the general requirements of a successful adaptive management plan. The Work Group suggested that assurances are critical for a successful adaptive management plan. The Work group will discuss assurances and adaptive management future meetings.

Development of the Scientific Review Panel for the ERPP

The Work Group expressed the need for an independent scientific panel review of the ERPP and provided input into a proposal for establishing and conducting such a review. The Work Group discussed the process and structure for a facilitated Scientific Review Panel, selection criteria for panelists and technical advisors to the Panel, scope of review, and potential questions to help guide panel discussions. The following outlines major

issues discussed by the Work Group.

Process and Structure for a Facilitated Scientific Review:

- The process should be open to the public with some type of opportunity for public comment. The extent to which public comment should be part of the process varied considerably among Work Group participants. Some participants favored minimal public comment to allow the panel to do the work asked of it, while others wanted significant public comment even if it limited deliberation time among the panel members.
- There should be interaction between scientists on the Panel and technical advisors to help the Panel stay focussed on the issues at hand.
- There may be a need to continue a Scientific Review Panel into the future, however, there was no clear consensus on this.

Timing:

There was considerable discussion regarding the timing of the Scientific Review Panel relative to the public review period for the ERPP.

- Some participants felt that convening the Panel during the public review period of the ERPP could stimulate interest in the ERPP, encourage public participation, help reviewers of the ERPP refine comments based on the Panel's findings, and occur before stakeholder viewpoints had been polarized.
- Other participants felt that convening the Panel following the public review period of the ERPP could provide public comments to focus the Panel's deliberation and give more time for people to review and comment on the ERPP and attend the Panel workshop.

Selection Criteria of Panelists and Technical Advisors to the Panel:

The Work Group provided input on the selection criteria for both the Scientific Review Panel and the technical advisors. Additionally, Work Group participants provided nominations of scientists who met the criteria. Discussion at the Work Group focused on the following issues:

- Discussed and agreed upon criteria for selection of Panelists and technical advisors. An ideal number of Panelists is between ten and fifteen.
- There was general agreement that to ensure objectivity Panelists should not be actively involved in the Bay-Delta system. The Panel should be comprised of scientists from outside of the system who have no direct linkage to a research effort nor have an "advocacy" role in the system.
- The Panel should be comprised on scientists representing a diversity of disciplines including landscape ecologists, fisheries/aquatic biologists, physical process scientists, and terrestrial/wetland ecologists.
- Members of the Panel should be "system"-level scientists.
- There should be broad representation of stakeholder interests among the technical advisors to the Panel. Technical advisors will be utilized in two ways: 1) to assist in preparing background material describing issues related to each question; and

2) be available to provide assistance during deliberations of the Panel.

Scope of Review and Potential Questions to Guide Panel Discussions:

To frame the scope of the Panel's review, the Work Group has provided input on questions to guide the Panel discussion. Discussion by the Work Group has focussed on the following items:

- The scope of review of the ERPP will focus on a broad evaluation of the scientific concepts and the foundations on which the ERPP is built.
- Questions have been formulated and briefings will be prepared to provide background necessary to understand the system, highlight stakeholder issues of concern regarding the system and the ERPP, and to derive information required by CALFED to improve the ERPP.

Discussion Points for Future Meetings

- Continue discussion and provide input on the facilitated Scientific Review of the ERPP.
- Review subsequent ERPP Volumes as they become available in July and August
- Participate in Scientific Review Panel workshop to be held in September